

Hand Hygiene Fact Sheet

There are many diseases that can't be cured, and in some cases we don't even know what causes them. But most health professionals agree you can substantially reduce your risk of illness by the simple act of washing your hands often. Dirty hands can be cured. That sounds simple, but most people aren't very consistent at washing as much as they should.



What's the Problem?

According to studies done by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): Only about two thirds of adults wash after using the toilet - women significantly more often than men. Fecal matter carries a variety of serious infectious diseases. One of four adults does not wash after changing a baby's diaper - creating a high risk of giving the caregiver and other children infectious diarrhea and other diseases. Fewer than half of us wash after handling our pets or cleaning up after them. Just one in three wash after sneezing or coughing. Not even one in five wash after handling money, a major carrier of disease germs. One in three E.coli outbreaks are caused by poor personal hygiene (hand washing) by food handlers.

What's the Solution?

Clean your hands! When done correctly, hand washing is the single most effective way to prevent the spread of infectious disease, such as a cold, the flu or infectious diarrhea.

Good hand washing technique is easy to learn. Follow these four simple steps to keeping hands clean:

- Wet your hands with warm running water.
- Add soap, and then rub your hands together, making a soapy lather. Do this away from the running water for at least 10 – 15 seconds, being careful not to wash the lather away. Wash the front and back of your hands, as well as between your fingers and under your nails.
- Rinse your hands well under warm running water. Let the water run back into the sink, not down to your elbows. Turn off the water with a paper towel and dispose in a proper receptacle.
- Dry hands thoroughly with a clean towel.